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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a summary of the proceedings of a public lecture and a seminar conducted by William F. Mackey, on "Options for Language Promotion by Means of the Education System" and "Implications of Bilingualism," including the question and answer sessions. Part one, summarizing the lecture, discusses the role of the educational system, the use of Irish in the community, and the attitudes of the public. Part two, summarizing the seminar, discusses what state institutions, other agencies, and individuals can do to promote the use of Irish. It is felt that while two thirds of the population wish to see at least as much Irish in use as English, this cannot become a reality unless skills are improved and maintained, and that this cannot be done until there is some agreement on how the survival of the Irish language can be ensured. (Author/AM)

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IRISH LANGUAGE PROMOTION:

POTENTIALS AND CONSTRAINTS

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Professor William F. Mackey

Editor: Tomás Ó Domhnalláin

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BORD NA GAEILGE

IRISH LANGUAGE PROMOTION: POTENTIALS AND CONSTRAINTS

PROFESSOR WILLIAM F. MACKEY

Proceedings of a Public Lecture given by Professor Mackey under the auspices of Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann *on 4 April, 1977 and of a Seminar under the auspices of* Bord na Gaeilge *on 5 April, 1977.*

EDITOR: TOMÁS Ó DOMHNALLÁIN

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BORD NA GAEILGE

INTRODUCTION

Professor William F. Mackey is founder and former Director of the International Center for Research on Bilingualism, Laval University, Quebec, Canada and is an internationally known expert on bilingualism. Professor Mackey visited Ireland in April, 1977 on the invitation of Bord na Gaeilge. On 4 April, 1977 he gave a public lecture under the auspices of Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann, entitled *Options for Language Promotion by means of the Education System* and on the following day he conducted a Seminar under the auspices of Bord na Gaeilge on *Implications of Bilingualism*. On each occasion Professor Mackey's address was followed by a session during which he replied to questions put to him by members of the audience.

This *Paper* gives an edited version of the proceedings of both the public lecture (Part I) and the seminar (Part II), including the question and answer sessions. The introductory part of Professor Mackey's address at the Bord na Gaeilge Seminar has been omitted, because its content was very similar to the introductory portion of his public lecture which is given in Part I of this *Paper*.

The title of this edited version, together with the final amendments to the script, have been kindly supplied by Professor Mackey.

Tomás Ó Domhnalláin

Director I.T.É.

PART I .

IRISH AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

During the past half-century much has been done to promote and expand the use of the Irish language throughout Ireland. It is only in the past few years, however, that any serious attempts have been made to analyse the results of these policies of language promotion and to obtain a quantitative and objective picture of the state of the Irish language use to serve as a basis for further development in the language policy of the nation. The most thorough study of the use of Irish to date is the investigation of the Committee on Language Attitudes Research into the state and status of Irish in the late seventies.

I propose to discuss the *Report* of this Irish *Committee on Language Attitudes Research*[1] which was submitted to the Minister for the Gaeltacht in October, 1975. I shall speak of my own reading of the *Report*, of how I judge it and of its implications as I see them.

The point of view I take might be called an ecological one, namely that language is part of the human ecology. Language is a behavioural trait which cannot be limited to any particular area of society, not even school, nor the home, nor the place of work. Accepting this hypothesis one must answer the question "What is to be the role of the school in promoting the Irish language, not only from the point of view of the school, but from the point of view of the society?" Language cannot be divorced from life or from society and the school is only one of the contexts in which it is used.

Language thrives in a social system, one might say an eco-system, in which all elements, home, work, school and community interact; any language policy which does not take account of that factor is doomed to failure. It is only within an eco-system of that sort that the past and future of Irish in Ireland can be understood and that the potential of the schools for the language can be interpreted. Such a system can be very complex, but I will try to explain it simply as an inter-action model on which research has already been based : government is responsible for both educational policy and for language policy; demands and pressures on government come from society or from the community; government tries to respond through educational policy, and insofar as language preservation and teaching are concerned, through a language policy in education; this policy can have influence on society through language laws and a policy of bilingualism, through use of Irish in the public service and so on; it can also directly affect the school curriculum and thus influence teaching methods, materials, even the type of teacher allowed in the schools; there is also a relationship between methods approved and the actual teaching activity; and all this has for its purpose the procuring of the learning and maintenance of a particular language by individual learners or by as many of them as possible.

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[1] In future referred to as C.L.A.R.

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To look upon that as the end, as many people do, is to be entirely unrealistic. It must be remembered that the learner, too, is a member of society and that his learning is influenced by the society as well as by the school. This is a simple model which we should keep in mind in considering the *Report*.

What is the situation of Irish within this system? The answers are in the C.L.A.R. *Report*. Since the *Report* gives the context within which the educational system must operate, it is important to understand it before attempting any kind of language promotion within the schools. The findings of such a report are valid, of course, only for the period to which it refers and some event could occur at any time which might considerably modify the effects of its conclusions. I mention this merely as a general principle of attitudinal survey, not as applying in this particular case. In fact I consider the results of the C.L.A.R. research to be very reliable. It was a sophisticated piece of psycholinguistic research and could not be bettered in the circumstances. The *Report* is one in which we may have complete confidence. It bears comparison with, or is even better than, similar work carried out in Canada and I, for one, have absolute confidence in its findings, both on the credit side and on the debit side.

On the credit side the *Report* reveals both massive support for the language and great potential for its use. On the debit side there is pessimism about the future of the language and a certain disillusionment about the capacity of any organisation, including the school system, to save it. We must, therefore, distinguish between policy support and its success and credibility. It is as if people were saying: "Well, I hope they can do it, but I don't think they can." Since there is inter-relationship however, between attitudes towards language, ability to use it and its actual use, which are very distinct things, it is necessary to study every one of them separately before trying to interpret the inter-relationship, causal and otherwise, between them. This is how the *Report* tackled the problem, and wisely so. I would like, therefore, to speak of what the *Report* says firstly about attitudes, secondly about ability and thirdly about usage.

ATTITUDES TO IRISH

As to attitudes, the *Report* reveals the widest support for Irish as a symbol of national identity. While there is widespread agreement on the desiderata there is disagreement on the implementation, on what exactly should be done. The more specific one becomes about implementation the greater the disagreement. This would suggest that any effective policy must necessarily include options. As far as attitudes are concerned, about one third of the population is in favour of more Irish than English being used, another third is in favour of less Irish than English, while a third favours equal use of both Irish and English. Indeed, some people seem to want to keep as much English in use as there is at present and yet use more Irish, as if there were more than twenty-four speaking hours in the day! This type of attitude occurs commonly in answer to research questions: attitudes are emotionally controlled and one cannot expect them to be logical. However, this poses a problem for government, which must try to respond to attitudes — to allow people at the same time to have their cake and eat it.

While two thirds of the general population favour the use of as much or more Irish than English, the *Report* reveals widespread disappointment with what has so far been achieved and shows some pessimism as to the survival of Irish, even in the Gaeltacht, on the development of which many people feel the whole future of the language depends.

Now,language attitudes in the Gaeltacht are somewhat different. People there seem pre-occupied with the commercial usefulness of Irish while being more in favour of its use. More than 90% of people in the Gaeltacht, for example, favour television programmes in Irish, as against two thirds in the country as a whole — quite a considerable difference.

It is important, too, that there is widespread support only for policies that support Irish without putting non-speakers of Irish at a disadvantage. In fact there is considerable opposition to any sort of unfair advantage coercion, or indeed favouritism, connected with language. This, of course, causes a dilemma: there is support for a maximum of choice and a minimum of compulsion, particularly in regard to Irish in the schools. There is some support for requiring Irish in the schools, yet none for punitive language policies in education. There is even support for more all-Irish schools to the extent that 70% of the population favour the provision of more such schools, even though such schools be provided only on demand and such demand is not very high.

ABILITY IN IRISH

As to the Irish learned in school, while mastery of school Irish as distinct from home Irish is recognised as a marker of educational success, there is little support for the kind of Irish taught in schools, and there is dissatisfaction generally with the way it has been taught at certain levels. Failure to learn Irish at school, because of what today is known as performance anxiety and task overload, has been for many an unpleasant experience. As can be imagined, attitudes may be influenced by learning success or failure, that is, by a person's ability to use the language as a result of having been taught it in school.

In the past half century Irish has continually declined as a first language and continually expanded as a second language. While Gaeltacht speakers become fewer people with school-learned Irish become more numerous, even in predominantly English-speaking areas: some 10,000 young people aged between 20 and 25 years in the city of Dublin are capable of conversing in Irish, yet, outside Dublin in the population as a whole only one third of the people can understand the language and only one third of these feel at home in Irish. In the Gaeltacht 90% of the population feel at home in Irish. The trend over the past half century seems to have been for the acquisition of Irish through schooling by fervent, educated middle-income groups. Since 1926 the percentage of home with Irish-speaking children has almost doubled and even the old-curriculum school approach seems to have built up in the population a certain passive competence in the language. About one third of those recording use of Irish in the home had no conversation in Irish in the past either in the school or in the home.

Now this upward trend could, of course, go down again for a number of reasons, as I will shortly point out. On first sight this trend seems to justify some optimism. On careful examination, however, one finds that this optimism may not in fact be justified, since the *Report* finds that there has been a very serious decline by age in the percentage of people who have been taught through Irish: 28% of people between the ages of 35 and 45 were taught through Irish, but only 20% of those between 20 and 30 years, and only 10% of those between the ages of 17 and 20 years. In the space of four years, for example, from 1968 to 1972, the real number of pupils in all-Irish schools had declined by 7%, a rate of decline of almost 2% per annum. The fact that by 1973 only 7,000 pupils were being taught in Irish would mean on the evidence a decline in the percentage of the next generation of adults with top ability in Irish.

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USE OF IRISH

If attitude is related to ability, ability is even more closely related to use, and I now propose to comment of the use of Irish as indicated by the *Report*. If you don't know the language it is obvious that you cannot use it. On the other hand, knowing the language does not mean that you will use it. About one third of the most fluent speakers of Irish rarely use the language. Another third make an effort to use Irish, but only half of those succeed in so doing, the other half being inhibited by factors such as lack of practice, fear of failure or even fear of criticism. Of those who do succeed in using Irish about one third do not come from Irish-speaking homes or schools. At work, however, only half of those who could use Irish actually get an opportunity to do so. All in all, about 5% of people outside the Gaeltacht use Irish regularly or frequently, while an additional 10% use it from time to time. What is most disconcerting is the continued decline of Irish as a community language and the increasing use of English between Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht.

It can be gathered from a study such as that described in the *Report*, in which relationships were set up between attitudes, ability and usage, that in fact one does correlate quite well with the others. Although ability does not ensure use, lack of ability certainly guarantees lack of use. The future of Irish depends on its use and this use cannot be expanded unless skills are improved and maintained. One of the ways this can be done is through the schools, and people generally look to the schools to do this. It might also be done through classes outside the schools, using language associations or other cultural movements. But the more Irish used in the schools, and the longer the period during which it is used, the better for the language.

Ability in the language is crucial. The greater a person's ability in the language the more likely is he to know others who speak the language. This appears from the various cross-tabulations in the *Report*. Those who leave school with only medium ability in the language not only fail to use Irish in later life, but also lose their ability to do so and then feel that their time devoted to Irish in school has been wasted. That is an important consideration, because it would appear that there is a threshold of ability below which tne investment is not worth the cost. Only those of high ability will use the language, it seems, so that there is a relationship between language ability and language choice.

During the course of the survey every informant was asked what would be his individual choice of language if all people in Ireland were bilingual, or how would he rate himself as using each language in such circumstances. In the national sample the answers indicated that 24% would use English only, 17% would use more English than Irish, 38% would use as much English as Irish, 11% would use more Irish and 8% would use only Irish. The amazing thing is that in the Gaeltacht sample the answers indicated just the converse: 7% would use English only, 26% would use more English, 34% would use as much English as Irish, 10% would use more Irish and 23% would use only Irish. While the small variations here may not be significant the general paralled is clear: in each case, for example, roughly one third would use as much English as Irish. Here is a situation which impels one to scratch one's head, to ask questions, to say "why?" In other words, what is it that actually inhibits the use of Irish even amongst those who have the ability to use Irish? That question can be answered from the figures.

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The first consideration is opportunity. Only two thirds of the national sample who can speak Irish have an opportunity to do so. The second is pressure of non-speakers of Irish. Now we are getting into the ecological situation: the pressure of non-speakers of Irish in any group. The presence of even one non-speaker of Irish in a group where all the others are Irish-speaking is enough to make the Irish speakers revert to English or to cause them not to speak it at all!! The third consideration is the fear of ridicule mentioned by the two thirds who are either unable to speak Irish well enough or who feel that people would laugh at them. The fourth consideration is mobility. Since there are no unilingual speakers of Irish left, Irish speakers moving into English-speaking networks or groups or communities, through marriage, or through friendship, or for whatever reason, cease speaking Irish. The more people who do this, of course, the less Irish is used, so that mobility is a factor in reducing the amount of Irish being spoken. The fifth consideration is stress: in any stress situation the bilingual who speaks Irish less well than English will naturally revert to speaking English, his more dominant language. One might say, therefore, that the language might best survive in a low-stress society, which might be possible in a post-industrial world, where everybody has everything he likes without having to fight for it, where stresses are low and all he has to think of is the speaking of Irish. Under such conditions he will speak Irish. You know, of course, that societies differ in degrees of stress: in Dublin there is less than in London and in the Gaeltacht less than in Dublin. It would appear that one language functions at the expense of the other.

There are also other, perhaps less obvious, factors. One is the dissolution of friendship networks. Quite often these are related to the exclusive use of Irish. This is interesting in studying the life cycle of Irish speakers. They establish friendship networks at school, and perhaps keep them, continuing to speak Irish. Then often perhaps by marriage, a non-speaker of Irish joins the family and the network is broken. Isolation is another factor: isolation from other speakers of the language or lack of an Irish-speech community. People have said that the language could be made to survive by creating diglossic situations, that is, creating situations in which Irish would be used for certain functions and English for other functions. However, the figures show that this is not possible: the proportion of competent speakers is so small and their distribution so random that one could not have such situations— except, perhaps, in certain parts of the Gaeltacht.

ROLE OF SCHOOLS

Now what are the implications of all this for educators? In other words, what can the schools do? Here I am going to be categorical, because I look forward to dealing with your questions later. The schools should be part of the Irish-speaking community if at all possible. There should be increased contact between Irish-speaking families through parent-teacher associations and other such groups. This is possible and feasible. The school should promote adult classes and social groups. In other words, the socially oriented school should build up interpersonal relationships at that level, personal relationships which might flourish and continue. Concentrations of competent speakers must be promoted when children leave school, so that not only will little networks of Irish speakers be created, but that sympathy for and tolerance of the beginning speaker will be encouraged. Above all, the status of the national language must not be relegated to that of being a mere school subject: that may be a good way to kill the language as a means of communication.

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The language will be used if it is useful. At least one school subject might be taught in Irish and the promotion of Irish in the teaching of more and more subjects is essential. At the present time you have three types of school: A - *Schools* using all Irish, *B - Schools* which are bilingual and *O - Schools* which teach Irish as a subject only . It is very important to facilitate the creation of more and more A - schools, that is all-Irish medium schools. But consideration should also be given to increasing the number of B - schools, that is bilingual schools, permittimg varying degrees of bilingualism insofar as the public will support this. I am amazed at the small number of all-Irish schools in Ireland — in fact more students are learning through the medium of a second language in the city of Montreal than are learning through Irish in the whole of Ireland!

Another delicate problem here is the way in which the language is taught in schools. I have not made a personal investigation of this, as that could only be done by first-hand observation. I can only deal with what people think, as disclosed in the *Report*. But what they think is important, because that decides their attitudes and what they think is right to that extent. Many feel that what is taught is not current and that it is taught for bookish rather than educational reasons. If that is so my reaction would be that pupils should be taught what to say and how to say it rather than be taught literary or linguistic analyses of the language, that what should be stressed is use of the language rather than knowledge about it. This should be easy, especially for teachers whose own main language is Irish. One implication of this is that literary Irish might have to be taught at a more advanced level, as a third language one might say, almost as another subject. Obviously much of the ideological support for Irish is being lost during schooling because of lack of proper motivation. A problem for the schools, therefore, is to apply instrumental rewards for the learning of Irish without reducing ideological support for the language.

My own view as a specialist is that it is extremely important to achieve a high level of motivation through enjoyment of the language and through success in its use. According to an attainable norm this is an extremely difficult thing to achieve, as I know from my experience in Quebec, and money does not seem to help. What is needed is a high level of motivation in the class, a teacher with a high level of linguistic knowledge and of competence in the language, and of course, a high level of teaching skill, and all these at one and the same time. It is important to remember, too, that even a slight improvement in competence in the language giving rise to an increased love for it is a major factor in ensuring its increased use: when given the opportunity this is a major factor, too, which can be brought into use without creating new structures; only new curricula in the language would be required and perhaps another look at the modernisation of the language; phonology, spelling, more and better text books, better teachers and so on. This is a tall order, perhaps, but it is the factor which seems to come up as the one which would contribute most to the expansion of the use of the language.

There is, therefore, a tremendous potential for the language and a desire that something might happen to convert this potential into actual use. I repeat, however, that this conversion is not an easy thing in the absence of concentrations of Irish speakers in the community and owing to the fact that one English speaker becoming a regular member of an otherwise possibly Irish-using group is sufficient to convert that group over a period to the exclusive use of English. I now propose to take your questions and to return, later, perhaps, to more general principles of bilingual policy.

QUESTIONS

Question: *What did you mean by diglossia?*

Answer: Diglossia is simply the functional distribution of language. In the Gaeltacht the language of the home could be exclusively Irish while the language of work or of the church, might be English. This is a diglossic situation. Contrariwise in Quebec, for instance, at present there is no longer a problem of diglossia, since the policy is to get rid of diglossia and strengthen the French language. In Montreal, however, English was the language of work for a long time, whether the population was English or French, but now the government policy is to make French the language of work throughout Montreal, and to diminish the occurrence of diglossic situations which were characteristic of the city up to a few years ago.

Question: *Why do you think diglossia is not possible in Ireland?*

Answer: Diglossia is possible if the language behaviour of the population is modified so as to promote the consistent use of one language for one activity and of the other language for other activities. If, however, the type of language behaviour revealed by the investigation does not change in the direction of more and more Irish for at least one specific social function, the possibility of placing Irish throughout Ireland in a diglossic relationship with English would not be very great. The *Report* indicates not a single domain in which Irish and only Irish is used by the entire population. Certain individuals and groups, however, can and do use Irish exclusively for certain purposes; but contact with speakers who use English for these same purposes waters down, as it were, their diglossic character tending to make the situations more and more bilingual as they become less and less Irish.

It is certainly not possible outside the Gaeltacht, because there are not sufficient Irish speakers in any one area. It could not be achieved at work in Galltacht areas because most of the workers would not understand Irish or could not speak Irish. It would be possible in some homes, but only in some, because some Irish speakers marry non-speakers of Irish.

Question: *Would you comment on the situation here, where most of the time is given to reading and writing Irish before learners can properly speak it, not only at post-primary level, but also at University level?*

Answer: This should be done only where Irish is the home — or mother — language. To do so where Englisn is the mother language would be to greatly retard the development of fluency. The normal policy throughout the world today is literacy first in the mother tongue, that is, that children learn to read and write in the mother tongue before learning to read and write in the second language, even in a bilingual situation.

Question: *Would you consider it important that all-Irish medium schools spring up even where parents would be unable to help their children to learn subjects through the medium of Irish?*

Answer: Here you are referring to the immersion-type school, not to the all-Irish school for children from Irish-speaking homes. You could, of course, have varying degrees of bilingualism in schools, so that not all the work would be through Irish. In the case of the all-Irish medium school there is little option: the teaching would be largely oral for the first two years and here you have the problem of literacy: should the children be literate first in English or in Irish? I do not know, because there are points for and against. In Quebec it seems to be no problem: 10,000 English-speaking

children become literate first in French, which is not their home language. In the United States, however, where children from Spanish-speaking homes become literate first in English, difficulties seem to arise.

Question: *Since Irish is not used in industrial or commercial sectors, is it a waste of time trying to revive it in order to more or less keep it alive for sentimental reasons, not to push for its total revival?*

Answer: My answer to that is that money is not everything and that we can not predict trends in language behaviour which depends on the scale of values. If you look upon society merely as a consumer society, that is, one geared solely towards earning and spending money, towards an improved standard of living, obviously Irish is in a bad way! But that is not necessarily the only type of society. In the post-industrial world people are returning to other values.

Question: *How does one assess language ability and does fluency necessarily imply bilingualism?*

Answer: The C.L.A.R. *Report* was based on survey research and was very well done. Survey research does *not* assess language ability, it merely asks about it. There was no assessment, merely self-report. Where categories of informants are very large this is quite reliable. One could, of course, validate self-report results by correlating them with some real ability tests. Where this has been done it has been shown that you can rely on self-reporting. But there is no test in the world that really measures degrees of language knowledge. Language acquisition can be measured against specific course in language, but not against the whole language. So even with a test it could not be done properly. Hence we had to settle for self-report.

Question: *We are dealing with cultural concepts: if one is bilingual should this not imply that one has an intuitive understanding of the cultural concepts in both languages. Is this possible and is this usually the case of the true bilingual?*

Answer: Having done considerable research on cultural concepts, I could talk about this at length. The obvious cultural concepts are that the language, which is a system of representation of the universe, actually cuts up the universe so that you can not only talk about it, but think about it, and no two languages can do it in the same way. So that if you are fluent in two languages you just have to be able to cut up the universe in two ways — if you don't, you may make an awful lot of mistakes.

Question: *Surely fluency does not imply that students learning Irish do this?*

Answer: If you belong to a bi-cultural community you will certainly have different sets of associations as, for instance, in a French-speaking community in North America. There you have one system of cultural concepts worked out in two languages, so that the French language in Canada is a certain dialectical type of French. In Ireland, I see a problem, because learners are not really in an Irish environment. Irish speakers, for example, eat the same food as English speakers in Ireland.

Question: *Would you agree that people learn a language, not as an end in itself, but rather as a means to an end, a kind of key to getting to know*

people, to understand emotional situations? They want to go all the way, all the trappings of the language: reading, learning other subjects through it. If they cannot achieve this they may become dissatisified with having begun at all.

Answer: I agree. Only linguists do not come into the above category. Other people learn language for a purpose and the more purposes there are for a language the stronger it is and the more attractions it has for its community. English, for example, is one of what I call the powerful languages — there are hundreds of reasons for learning it.

Question: *I am surprised that you accepted so uncritically the verdict of the sample on the quality of the teaching of Irish in the schools. My impression is that the teachers of Irish are committed, they themselves are revivers. So deeper reasons must be sought than the fact that people say they don't use Irish because they were badly taught in school. My interpretation is that Irish has for these people a symbolic value only, that it is a language to put on postage stamps and so on. The only point in their lives where they had real — but forced — contact with Irish was in school, and they reacted negatively. Then when asked why they didn't speak Irish they thought of this school experience, which they disliked,and answered accordingly. Teachers have been working hard and I am doubtful that improvement in the quality of teaching as suggested in the* Report *and accepted by you, would lead to improvement. If teachers have been failing, the reason must be sought elsewhere than in the quality of the teaching.*

Answer: Dedication is important but it is productive if directed toward the achievement of specific goals through effective methods. What the *Report* says is that people *think* that the quality of the teaching is at fault. Quite a number of the informants – not all, of course – are dissatisfied with it. And most of those who are dissatisfied are those lacking ability, or lacking very good ability, in speaking Irish.

Question: *Yes, but the recommendation, do you accept that?*

Answer: Well I would say there must be a reason for the responses. For some, learning Irish was an unpleasant experience; if it were pleasant, they wouldn't have said what they did say. I think the only way to answer the question is by trying to evaluate the teaching done in schools in relation to the objective. I get the impression that people feel it is too bookish — especially in secondary schools, that it is not conversational, that they do not have fun in class. Successful language learning has a high emotive content, much more than its information content. Perhaps more research could provide the answer.

Question: *There have been people in high positions who advocated learning Irish, who exhorted working class people to learn Irish, to use Irish, but they themselves in their own occupations were not inconveniencing themselves to do so. Will you consider the proposition that progress towards bilingualism, or towards the eventual use of Irish as a medium of communication will not be made until a sufficient number of people in positions of power, in the church, in government, in trade unions and such groups, show by their actions that they are willing to practise what they preach.*

Answer: Resentment against the use of the language seems to come mainly from those lower income groups who cannot use Irish. They seem to say it's all very well for you with good education, job security and so on, to speak Irish. But I, I must have English for my job, — I don't really need Irish. Class distinction comes to the fore in the *Report* and this is one of its surprising revelations. It would appear that the middle class educated sector of the population is in favour of using Irish, not most people at the lower economic level. This perhaps would not have been the case fifty or sixty or a hundred years ago when Irish was the dominant language of more people with lower levels of education.

Question: *Two of my children were taught Irish by the speech or communication method, two were taught otherwise and the results are not comparable. If a teacher enjoys the language she can transmit it and the child will enjoy it, but if it is just a programme to be covered there will be no love for it.*

Answer: I agree entirely. If a teacher likes the language and tries to make it interesting, and, of course, if in addition he is a skilled teacher, all the better. As I have already said, there is a high emotive content in language teaching.

Question: *Do you think the immersion system is good for children whose mother tongue is different from that of the school?*

Answer: I believe that depends on the situation in the community. I don't believe general statements can be made about such things. Immersion education has been tried out in Montreal where it seems to succeed. In working with a Government Commission investigating this approach in Quebec I noticed a phenomenon which has not yet been explained, namely the *return to the species* phenomenon. So far it is just theory, that is, that in immersion courses by the age of seven years the children involved become perfectly bilingual, that is, they speak the second language so well that you could not tell which was their mother tongue. Later, perhaps at the age of ten, when they have learned more of the language they seem to speak the second language as a foreign language, making mistakes in grammar and pronunciation as if they had just gone to school. I have my own explanation for this: to me it indicated clearly that it is the community, not the school, which controls the language.

Question: *Does going into an all-Irish school without having a word of Irish have a traumatic restrictive effect on the child?*

Answer: There is quite a lot of research on this and I think traumatic is hardly the correct description. The traumatic effect might rather come about as a result of trying to learn something in a language you do not understand. And, of course, this is related to teaching techniques. If one were to say to a child, for instance, "you've got to get through this examination, and all the course will be in Hungarian". Of course, if you put a child in that situation the effect would be traumatic. I must also say that the age at which the child enters the immersion programme is all-important: it should occur at a very early age.

Question: *Has research been done on the attitudes of primary teachers to Irish? This is important, because all primary teachers have to teach Irish and if a high percentage were not highly motivated this would be crucial.*

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Answer: You are bound to get a large sector of the group who are not highly motivated. Ideally, of course, we should use only people who are highly motivated, who have good linguistic knowledge and who have good teaching skills. This seems simple enough, but it is the crux of the problem in all countries where second languages are being taught on a large scale: it is difficult to get everything you are asking for.

Question: *Well, we have done some research on that problem and we found that the percentage of national teachers in favour of teaching Irish was very high indeed, in fact as high as 93%.*

Answer: Yes, at primary level. It is different at secondary level.

Question: *If one decides to send a child to an all-Irish medium school, is there any guideline as to what would be the best stage for strong emphasis on teaching through Irish in the case of a child from a non-Irish speaking home?*

Answer: Let me talk about French, because I don't know what research has been done in regard to Irish. If the situations are comparable, and I'm not sure if they are, in the French-speaking areas of Montreal the formula is very simple: the earlier the better. So they start at kindergarten and have nothing only French for two or three years. Then one of a number of things may happen: English may be introduced as a subject for an hour a day, or something like that. There are all sorts of formulas for phasing in English. But for French the formula is the earlier the better. That might be true for Irish here also.

Question: *What age group would kindergarten cater for?*

Answer: Kindergarten caters for the five-year-olds. In some cases now, as in Texas, they begin at three years old, which may be a little too young.

Question: *On a small point of clarification: when you referred to stress situations, did you refer to teaching situations or learning situations?*

Answer: I meant just the speaking situation. It is normal, you know, if you are bilingual that your dominant language comes up when you are under stress, whether you like it or not. So living in a stressful society does not encourage bilingualism.

Question: *I wondered if you were transferring (conclusions) from some research done in a teaching situation — in a school, for example?*

Answer: Oh, you are referring to performance anxiety and task overload. Quite a bit of recent research has been done on that. Apparently what blocks language learning in schools more than anything else is what is known as performance anxiety, in other words, the knowledge that one will have to use the language, to say or write something in the language, and being very anxious not to make a mistake because there is a puristic attitude in the school: The teacher does not tolerate mistakes. This will create a blockage.

The second item, task overload, is related to performance anxiety in the sense that if you ask too much from the language class you will probably get nothing. Whereas if you ask very little you may get everything! I am exaggerating here, of course. This is interpreted in a formal way in language teaching skills: that the stages are separated. Let me give an example: you want to teach a language in a way that everyone is relaxed and nobody is tense. We are going to make things extremely easy at the beginning and we are not going to ask for speed, nor ask people to write, we are only going to ask them to listen. And if they were adults you might only ask them to read. Later on you might ask them to react tc what they hear by doing something: responding to an order to stand up, perhaps, to see if they understand. Then you add on another skill, and so on. There must be a lot of input of the language, as it were, in a situation where the task you ask them to perform is very easy; then there is no anxiety, no stress situation.

Question: *I would like to raise the question of stress situations in cases where people whose first language is Irish come to hospital: such people are at a great disadvantage in Ireland, because in stress situations arising in illness neither the doctor nor the nurse may be sufficiently bilingual to use Irish with the patient. I think this is an important area and I wonder if any research has been done into it?*

Answer: Yes, much research has been done on the effects of stress on language availabilty. But the answer here might possibly be to encourage Irish speakers to learn English in order to be able to use it in such a hospital situation! There is no end to the arguments for learning English: you may need it to get a job, and so on, as I said before. That of course is one of the problems: all language survival probably has a price tag. Anyone who thinks that language survival can be got for nothing is under an illusion. It would have been nice if questions of price tags had been included in the survey, but it is too late now.

To me the crucial question appears to be, if you have all those people in favour of the survival of Irish, what are they willing to pay for it? It is going to cost something more than money, in fact, public funds cannot buy language survival unless people in sufficient numbers are motivated enough to sacrifice something in exchange. When for example, the alternative is economic betterment through the use of more English and consequently less Irish as against cultural identity through the use of more Irish and less English: how many will opt for the latter? In other words how much economic advancement are individuals willing to forego in return for greater cultural and linguistic identity? That seems at the moment to be the crucial question.

PART II

IRISH AND THE COMMUNITY

In referring to what it is possible for the Government, or for voluntary organisations such as trade unions, to do towards the promotion of the Irish language I may be simply speaking of things which have been tried before. Nevertheless, I must refer to them as possible options.

STATE ORGANISATIONS

One obviously must begin with what the Government can do. They can see to the use of Irish in the Public Service. Now, I know that has been tried and people say: "Well, it doesn't work". I wonder to what extent it has been attempted? Has everything been tried in this regard? It certainly is something which must be discussed.

Secondly, the Gaeltacht must be upgraded. I know this has been attempted time and time again, but maybe something further remains to be done. I am aware that the State is limited in what it can do; and people must realise that. In the last analysis, indeed, only the people can make the language survive, the Government can only, by a certain amount of manipulation, increase the probability of language survival and encourage it. Certainly coercion does not work.

A third possibility is language training. This also has been tried, I know. But has there been sufficient follow up? Have efforts been made to maximise the establishment and maintenance of inter-person networks — to lead school-leavers into Irish-using situations and groups? People are Irish-speaking on leaving school, but go into a work-world which functions entirely in English and, of course, forget the Irish they knew. This is crucial and is an extremely important phase in the life cycle of Irish speakers. Why should greater efforts not be made to integrate the Irish-speaking school leaver into an Irish-speaking instead of an English-speaking milieu? This should be possible in many cases where school leavers are absorbed into one sector or other of the Public Service. Irish should be established as a language of work, at least in the Gaeltacht and in the Public Service. In the Gaeltacht, for example, any increase in population will depend on industrialisation, which may in turn depend on a certain degree of immigration. This, as you can imagine, is a very delicate situation, as can be illustrated by a glance at the history of the decline of the Welsh language: as the population increased use of the Welsh language declined because the industrialisation which took place towards the end of the nineteenth century was in English.

A fourth possibility is increased exposure to the language. Now here is one aspect in regard to which we must get rid of our illusions. There seems to be a feeling that more Irish can be used without any reduction in the use of English. This, of course, is a mathematical impossibility in the normal sense of language behaviour; unless people begin to speak faster or to speak more, or to write more, which is highly unlikely, then you must assume that every act of speech or of listening or of reading done in English is one less such act done in Irish. Thus it is the aggregate of these acts which favours one language at the expense of its rival, and only by increasing the number of

these acts in Irish can one hope to redress the balance. Anything done, therefore, to increase exposure to Irish, even listening to or reading Irish, promotes the survival of the language.

Now one of the most powerful of the listening media, and one which is getting more powerful daily, is television. I understand there is a successful television programme which is bilingual. This gets into the home. People are spending more and more time tuned-in to television in the home; here is at least one way of getting Irish into the home. Radio, of course is another. Clubs and popular events where the use of Irish is expected — at first in a relaxed atmosphere — can be promoted. Formality does not encourage language expansion generally, and it certainly does not encourage the natural use of language. In order to expand its use we must associate it with pleasurable activities.

Insofar as the Gaeltacht is concerned, there is the possibility of creating diglossic situations, perhaps, in cases where Irish is made to become the usual language of specific activities. This must be looked into. One thing has to be kept in mind, however: that is, that the Government cannot control inter-personal behaviour: any attempt to do so through coercion is bound not only to create opposition, but to end in the failure of the policy. Yet governments can control structures —one thing that has been tried in this regard has been the organisation of language units. Canada, for example, has invested a considerable amount of money i the creation of French Language Units in the Federal Public Service, units in which all the work is done in French, and where even English-speaking people are expected to function in French. Something similar could be tried in the Government Service in Ireland; but it has to be well structured or it will be a failure. None of the Government options mentioned above is an easy one.

OTHER BODIES

I should like now to turn to other organisations. What can be done there? Voluntary organisations can do just as much as the government, perhaps with greater success, to promote the use of Irish in the post-school situation. They can prevent slippage, improve adult competence and entice people to use the language continually. The media of communication can also contribute by providing more exposure to Irish, either in unilingual or in Irish-dominated programmes. Some qualification is needed here, however: if a programme on television or radio is not understood, every listener is at liberty to flick the switch; on the other hand if English is the dominant language of the programme it might even be counter-productive.

Suggestions have been made as to the introduction of simultaneous translation in certain areas of public life, at meetings, public functions and the like. This seems to be a good idea on the surface; but in fact it does not promote the language very much. It just permits those who know the language to function in it; those who don't know it are stuck with the ear-phones. This is one way *not* to promote bilingualism; rather is it a good way to promote unilingualism. On the other hand *consecutive* translation could promote the use of Irish, if you have the official language as the prior language as is the case for French at present in Quebec. The first text would be done in Irish and that would expose a lot of people to a little Irish. Only after the original text in Irish is the English version given in consecutive translation.

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Thus, there are a number of things which the government and voluntary bodies and organisations can do to improve peoples' competence in Irish, to maintain that competence, to revive the Irish of people who have somewhat forgotten the language, to expand its use at all levels of society and especially to get the language out of the classroom and into the streets by having the children who leave school develop habits of language behaviour which will result in their using Irish in their ordinary life in the community. In this regard the schools would have to become more community orientated.

INDIVIDUALS

I refer here to that part of the C.L.A.R. *Report* where speakers of Irish claim that they do not get an opportunity to use the language. About half of those who can use the language make this claim, so I think it would be necessary to recuperate that half in certain communities. Now this may not be an easy thing to do but it has been done elsewhere with a great deal of success. One solution is for all Irish speakers to greet strangers or those who are supposed to attend them in shops, in offices, in government or elsewhere, in the first instance in Irish. Such action could double the use of Irish among those who can actually speak it, because of the probability of finding other Irish speakers who would respond to such initial greetings. My estimates here are based on the results of the C.L.A.R. research as given in the *Report*. In some situations the person who commences a conversation in Irish will have a two out of three chance of getting a reply in that language, while there might be a fifty-fifty chance of being able to continue the conversation in Irish. These probabilities, of course, would increase as the practice became current. But here we are dealing with human behaviour and even a little modification like this is not easy to start. It might succeed or it might not. Mass behaviour is difficult of modification; but even a slight modification can bring about an increase in the use of Irish by those who know it.

There is part of the *Report* which deals with people who do not use Irish because of fear of failure, of fear of ridicule, of fear of making mistakes. What can be done about this? What can be done to help people to overcome their fears, to make them attempt to use the language? The first thing is to eliminate the purism of those who know the language, and sometimes of those who teach it. It is typical of a declining language to have movements of purism; the argument seems to be that the language is dying because it is being adulterated or contaminated by another language and that, if things continue in that way, people will speak a mixed language and will become inferior. This is a symptom, not a cause, as you can see. In fact, the language is declining because people are not using it, they are not learning it. Now in a healthily bilingual country the state, or those who control language policy, can afford to support purism movements if neither language is in decline. This does not kill either language, it merely drives people to use the language in which they feel more comfortable. But even in such cases purism can do more harm than good to the language which is supposedly being protected.

These are a few of the ideas that have come to me as a result of my reading of the C.L.A.R. *Report*. I put them before you not with the intention of informing you, but simply in order to refresh your memory on something you know already, that we may use it as a basis for the discussion to follow.

DISCUSSION

Question: *Would you be prepared to make any recommendation in regard to special measures which might be taken for regions which border on, or lie near to, the Gaeltacht?*

Answer: There are opportunities here, but there are also dangers. It would be a mistake, for instance, to take a lot of English speakers, to put them in the Gaeltacht and to say: "Now, you go right ahead!" Or if people from the near-Ghaeltacht who had English as their dominant language were merely brought into the Gaeltacht, in situations of normal business for example, it is probable that their dominant language, English, would prevail. You might thus Anglicise the Gaeltacht rather than Gaelicise the near-Ghaeltacht. If contacts could be arranged, however, is situations where Irish would be the dominant language, and if only small numbers of English speakers who knew Irish were included into the situation there would be a possibility of the visitors improving their Irish by simply using it. It must be remembered, however, that there is a knowledge threshold in regard to use of a language and a person whose knowledge is below this threshold cannot function in the language. We cannot define the threshold in regard to Irish, but we do know from the *Report* that it exists. Only the person who has reached a certain level of Irish would be able to penetrate an Irish-speaking network, so to speak, and would be accepted in it. If his Irish were too weak people might, out of politeness or for other reasons, revert to English and that, of course, would be counter-productive.

Apart from that, such an approach is not likely to be successful in the long-term, for non-linguistic reasons — I mean if you were to say to people: "Now, go to the Gaeltacht and speak Irish", I don't think you'd get much enthusiasm. People don't speak languages just for the sake of speaking them. They speak them for various reasons: in order to get along, to have a good time, to shop, to do business, to study , to pray and the like.

There are opportunities in this area, however, and I may refer later to some research which might be done. But any type of language promotion activity of this kind, because of the unpredictable nature of human behaviour, would need to be continually monitored. In other words, you must simply look at what is happening and see if you are getting what you expected to get. If you are not, that's the time to stop. For one to sit behind a desk and say: "Well, we'll try this or that, and it's going to work!" is not very sensible. It's as likely not to work as it is to work.

Question: *How do you see the role of television*
(a) in the language maintenance situation
and (b) in the language expansion situation?

Answer: I think, from my observation, that television is an extremely helpful medium for language control. But it could be counter-productive if improperly used. The main thing is that television is for entertainment, although of course it can also be informative. I am not referring here to educational television, which while entertaining can also be informative. If a programme is entertaining and if it is presented in the target language it is going to promote the language in the home. The important thing is that the viewers are not impelled to switch off or to turn to another station, and this they are unlikely to do so long as the programme continues to entertain.

It would be ideal – but perhaps it is only a pipe-dream – if the most entertaining television programmes in Ireland were mostly in Irish. I don't say *entirely* in Irish, because then most people might not understand them. Programmes entirely in Irish need a very strong visual support, so that viewers would understand most of the content through the language of pictures – good filming is crucial. The Japanese have succeeded in producing films in which understanding of the accompanying spoken word was unnecessary; in fact some pictures had no accompanying language.

Television is certainly the most powerful medium for the maintenance of language through planned programming. It gets into the home and if it attracts listeners it will help to maintain the language by promoting at least passive bilingualism and knowledge comprehension. This is so true that one of the great battles in areas of bilingualism, or perhaps, I should say in areas of language confrontation, is who is to control the television medium, and how the other language can be prevented from getting into the home.

Chairman: *Very well deserved tribute has been paid by Professor Mackey to the producer of a certain television programme in the presence of the Chairman of the Television Authority and of the producer himself. May I therefore, invite the producer to make a contribution to the discussion?*

Liam Ó Murchú: *I would like to ask a question about motivation and the out-of-school teaching of language. What I have in mind is that when motivation is high, for example if people are about to go off to France or Italy, they will look at the appropriate language programme on television. But where motivation is not high how productive is the television teaching of language likely to be? Because we are thinking very actively about this at present, and, indeed, we had experience of this once before, that where the entertainment or attraction or enjoyment factor was very high, one held the audiences. But programmes had to be handled very delicately, because otherwise the switch-off would be very audible around the country. I wondered if from your broad experience you could offer us any advice about how successful a language teaching programme on television might be and particularly advice on the frequency and nature of the teaching.*

Answer: I think I can. In fact I have written four series for radio and a few for television. I would say that the prime motive is a desire to learn the language. But even a strong desire can peter out if interest in the programme is not maintained. What I did was to create a family and an intrigue, even starting from zero, language-wise; and that is extremely difficult to do. I mean, try in seventeen words to create a gripping drama! It may take six months to prepare a fifteen minute show! But it can be successful, so successful that when you get viewers identifying with the characters in the programme, then you really have them! We got to the point where people were much more interested in a character by the name of Mr. Grey and what he was going to do next than in the language. That is really what you want — to get out of the language into the use of the language. You may use puppets and things like that to explain the first conjugation and so on. But in that case language is not being used for the purpose for which it exists.

Another thing I can say is that television programmes are more difficult to create than radio programmes. They have an instrumentally greater potential, because one can use the language of pictures to create the language of words, and later on use the language of words to teach the language through the interaction of words and pictures. It becomes a sort of language in itself.

Now this is not easy to do. Here we are in the field of pictorial semantics; to achieve results and at the same time remain entertaining is difficult. But if one can do it it is probably one of the most successful means of language teaching. Why? Because teachers cannot spend the time required to do that sort of thing. It is highly technical. With your experience perhaps you can understand what is involved in this: you are weighing each word and in the sequence of pictures, if a particular word is introduced how will it affect the whole sequence as far as the understanding of the meaning is concerned?

What is the future of this? I would say it is worth investing in good television programmes. I am speaking of programmes on videotape or film, because it is too expensive to do them live. They should be kept for further use. It's good to invest in such programmes provided you are sure you are getting your money's worth, because in the next generation the programmes can go into video-cassettes. The advantage of video-cassettes is that you can get immediate feed-back. You can have spaced sentences with double-track recording in the same machine so that a person can monitor his own success. Once you have the basic programme you can do this sort of thing. I must add, however, that one could lose a lot of money on such programmes. So you can fail grandly after spending a great amount of money, or you can succeed grandly, but you still spend a lot of money.

Question: *Can one safely draw global conclusions about what television has to offer? Could it be that while entertainment counts a great deal both in Ireland and in America, there might be a greater educational expectation from television in Ireland and that properly directed educational programmes might be in demand in Ireland?*

Answer. Possibly so, but does one exclude the other? I've seen top-quality educational programmes -- not on language, I'm sorry to say -- which have high entertainment value. You should expect good educational results and good entertainment at the same time.

Question: *In speaking of possible functions of Government and of voluntary organisations you only introduced the word "investment" in connection with television. Could I ask a blunt question as to how much in relation to its annual budget, or to the G.N.P., the Government should spend in helping voluntary organisations in their work for Irish? You mentioned the millions of dollars spent on a programme in Canada, but I'm sure that was a mere drop in the ocean in relation to the Canadian budget or G.N.P.*

Answer: It is more a matter of cost-benefit than a question of actual expenditure. Any money made available will be spent, but the danger is the amount of such money that can be wasted. If you don't want to disappoint the taxpayers all expenditure must be carefully monitored and cost benefit analyses much be carried out. For example, language exposure can be measured more easily than language use. If you have certain options as to exposure, anything, say, from bilingual menus to the annual reports of trade union organisations, which would cost money to translate and print, the comparative costs could be assessed and compared. If we are to be honest in spending public funds we must be able to prove that the options selected are the optimal options : those which give the greatest amount of language exposure per pound spent.

Only after years of experience of such practices could one hope to answer questions as to the percentage of the G.N.P. which should be spent on language promotion. Otherwise you may be in the position where only a very slight improvement results from a very large investment, while something may be neglected which might provide a fairly wide improvement for a small investment. For example Canada has a policy of bilingualism of the public service at a cost of something like a billion dollars a year, without getting very much in return. A cost benefit analysis might have saved a tremendous amount of this money. This is the type of problem which must be considered.

Question: *Maximising the maintenance of Irish-speaking networks can only be done by voluntary organisations. Without adequate government support such organisations cannot live. Can these organisations do this work while at the same time keeping an eye — to put it mildly — on what the Government is not doing for Irish in other areas of its work? They spend a lot of time appealing for action in the public sector while at the same time trying to organise activities and to keep the language going on the ground. Can such dual-purpose voluntary organisations succeed if no money is granted without prior quantification and costing?*

Answer: I don't understand your statement that they have to have money to do that. What exactly are they going to use the money for?

Question: *It seems there is a total context in which language develops in Quebec whereas it seems to me there is a lack of total context in Ireland. Being a very small island we tend to look outwards. We are economically dominated by a very strong partner and therefore the pull tends to be away. When we spoke of voluntary organisations I was thinking of voluntary organisations which of themselves have no function in regard to the Irish language, but which could, perhaps, together with the Government, with public institutions, with language organisations, help to cultivate the total Irish ethos. This has nothing to do with narrow nationalism, it is something to make language development easier. Isn't that something which happened in Quebec?*

Answer: Yes, but before talking of Quebec I want to talk of general problems. I was not referring to voluntary language organisations. More important are organisations such as trade unions, clubs, service bodies; they are infinite in number: golf clubs, for instance, of which there are a large number in Ireland. If the directors of such organisations could be convinced of the principle that the more Irish is used — no matter how, where or how long it is used, or who uses it — the better for the survival of the language. Acceptance of this simple principle would mean that no opportunity would be missed to introduce a little Irish at formal functions and other occasions, almost as a ritual, you might say. If there were to be a little introduction in Irish even if we want to talk English from there on, that would be fine. You see this would give people who learned Irish in school an opportunity to hear the language and maybe even to use it.

Now, the position in Quebec is quite different. There is hardly any common point between Quebec and Ireland, except that human nature is the same in both places. You get compulsion in the civil service there, resulting in complete failure, as you would here. All those things which come out in the C.L.A.R. *Report* as results of certain policies have to do in the last analysis with the nature of human behaviour.

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The situation in Quebec, demographically, geolinguistically and from the points of view of language attraction and language pressure, is quite different from that in Ireland and is simply a movement towards the creation of a unilingual province, not a bilingual one. Bilingualism to the Quebecois means English, not French. In French Quebec the idea is to create an independent republic with one language — French. The Official Language Act passed in 1976 proclaims in its first article that the official language of Quebec is French. Nothing about English , which is not now recognised as an official language. There is toleration in that in certain cases, for example, advertising may be done in French and *another* language — probably English, but that is not mentioned, for the other language may be Italian or Greek or some other immigrant language.

In Ireland, however, the situation is one of promoting Irish, through a bilingual policy — not really the same thing. There is not in Ireland the classic situation of a confrontation of two unilingual masses that are really opposing each other, vieing for position and trying to delimit the territory in which they have jurisdiction. It would, indeed, be different if there were such a position. Then we could worry less about the position of Irish. But, in fact, it is a question of converting a second language into a first language. That is the problem and it is a big one.

Question: *Last night you dismissed the idea of depending on diglossia as an answer to the problem. Today you mention it as a possibility. Is there any correlation between success or lack of success in learning Irish and success or lack of success in learning other modern languages? If people apparently show that they are somewhat disillusioned by lack of success in the teaching of Irish, do we teach other languages as well or as badly as Irish? Would it be of benefit to look into, let us say, the not inconsiderable Italian community in Dublin, which is a complete community as distinct from the random scattering of Irish speaking individuals.*

Answer: First the diglossia problem and the success or lack of success in teaching other languages. If diglossia is defined as the functional distribution of languages, Ireland as a whole is not in a diglossic situation. It cannot be, on account of the distribution of Irish speakers who have achieved the level at which they will function in Irish; they are sparsely distributed among English speakers and taking into account the fact that the presence of only one English speaker can occasion a switch from Irish to English in most situations, the creation of diglossia becomes difficult. I do not say it is always impossible. It should be possible in the Gaeltacht; but it is unfortunately true that even there Irish speakers are using more and more English to talk to each other. If the reasons for this could be understood and speakers re-converted to Irish usage, it is possible that diglossia in parts of the Gaeltacht could be encouraged — always keeping in mind of course that one cannot legislate human behaviour. One can only encourage and create situations, in which the probability of achieving the objective happens to be higher. In what parts of Ireland is Irish always used for certain purposes to the exclusion of English? To answer this question is to enumerate the communities which are diglossic.

As to correlation between success in learning Irish and success in learning other languages, this is only true within the context of testing and examinations. It all depends on what you examine. There is, for instance, a high degree of correlation between examination results in language and examination results in other subjects where the examinations are of the same intellectual nature, where, for instance, problems in language are posed as rules and the application of rules, similar to problems which might be posed in mathematical subjects. Where the same type of

intellectual activity comes into play there will of course be a high degree of correlation.

Question: *I mean to refer to language: do we teach Irish worse or better than French?*

Answer: I haven't personally investigated the schools, but according to the *Report* this is what comes up: Irish seems to be taught in the same way that French is — no better and no worse. This evidence is gained from indirect survey research.

Question: *One thing you might find out: is the Irish class more boring than the French class?*

Answer: That is an extremely important point and I think that alone might be a deciding factor. I get the general impression — I don't have direct evidence of this — that in the primary schools there are dedicated teachers who are good teachers, and because they are good primary teachers they are *ipso facto* good Irish teachers, because they know they must motivate and arouse interest in the children. On the other hand I suspect strongly that this is not the case in the secondary schools where the teacher might be academically orientated and may like to talk about rules of grammar and the like, making the class less interesting. But this is only a feeling I get from reading between the lines of the *Report*, as it were.

Question: *I want to ask a question on motivation. Occasionally the Government issues a circular or sends a letter saying we should endeavour to get staff to use Irish. You can issue any circular or the Government can say something, but how do you motivate the individual? I get the feeling that the people who issue the circulars don't get beyond the first sentence or two in Irish themselves, and that they then proceed in the other language. This is bound to have an effect. Cannot the Government or somebody do something to create motivation, to make it popular to talk in Irish?*

Another point is about Irish place names: towns like Cluain Meala, Baile Átha Luain, Baile Átha na Slua, these have names which can immediately be associated with the place, which means something in relation to the place. Their anglicised forms relate back to the Irish and I wonder if this is something which could be put across, particularly on television, associating the name with the history. It seems to me that being able to link your own place with the language is something that would be useful.

Answer: About the first point, one way to kill a language is to make people overly self-conscious about its use. It puts the language in the same category as, let us say, pretended behaviour. If one becomes conscious of the form rather than the meaning, one is not involved in normal language behaviour.

END